CITY OF EAU CLAIRE, WI

For Immediate Release:

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Alum treatment on Eau Claire's Half Moon Lake begins next week

The City of Eau Claire, in partnership with the state Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is poised to launch a large-scale alum treatment to reclaim Half Moon Lake from an infestation of invasive plants.

The project begins Wednesday, June 15, and continues through Friday, June 17. Officials invite the public and the media to a news conference at 9 a.m. Wednesday, June 15, at the Tenth Avenue boat launch area, approximately six blocks north of the Hobbs Ice Center. Representatives from the DNR, City of Eau Claire and Army Corp of Engineers will be available to answer questions on the project.

Half Moon Lake will be treated with more than 180,000 gallons of alum – a non-toxic material similar to the principle ingredient in common, over-the-counter antacids – that will bind phosphorous in an insoluble compound so it can no longer feed algae blooms. The alum will also act to prevent phosphorus in lake sediments from re-entering the water column.

Boats will be allowed on the lake during the application, but boaters are asked to remain clear of the barge that will make the application. There are no restrictions on use of the lake for swimming, fishing or irrigating after the application. The alum will be applied by TeeMark Corporation of Aitkin, MN, under the supervision of the DNR and the USACE's Eau Galle lab. The alum is being applied under DNR permit #WCR-10-07-18.

TeeMark has provided the following schedule of events:

- June 14 (Tues) Arrive in Eau Claire and stage operation at the Tenth Avenue boat launch
- June 15 (Wed) Treat the area of Half Moon Lake south of the causeway and move to staging at Half Moon Lake Beach
- June 16 (Thur) Treat the northeast and western zones of Half Moon Lake
- June 17 (Fr) Complete northeast and west zones of the lake
- June 18 (Sat) Pull out by noon

Boaters are asked to access the lake from the Braun's Bay boat launch on June 15, 16 and 17, but to stay clear of the applicator barge during the chemical treatment.

Earlier this spring, Half Moon Lake received the third of three annual applications of the herbicide *Aquathol K*. The applications were designed to eradicate, to the greatest extent possible, the curly-leaf pondweed that has long dominated the entire lake. The alum is a one-time treatment, being applied for the first time in 2011 and is designed to capture phosphorous in the water column and settle on the bottom of the lake. This action will then allow native plants, previously outgrown by non-native, invasive plants, the opportunity to regain their presence in the lake.

For years the explosive growth of curly-leaf pondweed each spring has resulted in poor water quality for recreational lake users while preventing the growth of native plants important to the lake's locally treasured populations of game fish. Eurasian water milfoil expanded its grip on Half Moon, threatening to choke off large sections of the lake and overtake more native plants, but it was effectively eliminated after the 2009 herbicide treatment.

The invasive curly-leaf pondweed, which has multiple means of reproducing, exacerbated the problem. These plants pull large amounts of phosphorous from the nutrient-laden lake sediments and when they die back and break up each June they release phosphorous into the open water, just in time to stimulate summer algae blooms. Decomposing algae then removes dissolved oxygen from the bottom waters of the lake and starts a chemical chain-reaction that releases still more phosphorous from the sediments.

The problems afflicting Half Moon can be traced back for more than a century when oxen used by loggers wintered on the lake ice and contributed huge amounts of fertilizer to the lake bed each spring. Decades of urban runoff contributed more nutrient pollution before officials gained greater control over storm water.

This is not the first effort to save Half Moon Lake. For five years, ending in 2007, the city conducted an annual harvest of curly-leaf pondweed each spring in an effort to control its growth. The effort proved to be inadequate. Each curly-leaf pondweed plant annually releases hundreds of propagules, ensuring dense growth for up to three years.

Half Moon Lake, 154 acres of water in the shape of a horseshoe, surrounds Carson Park within the City of Eau Claire offering are residents a beautiful natural resource for fishing, water recreation and relaxation. City officials have developed this plan so the lake will continue to enrich the lives of city residents for generations to come.

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